LAIRE

24 PRO TIPS TO HELP YOU TAKE CHARGE IN YOUR MARKETING ROLE

TABLE OF
CONTENTS

LAURA LAIRE

CO-FOUNDER & CREATIVE BUSINESS STRATEGIST

THE COMMON MARKETER REALITY

Regardless of your marketing role, you probably wear more hats than originally outlined in your job description. You probably juggle multiple responsibilities, but it's up to you to get the job done — which often means you have to find shortcuts to finish your projects in the allotted time given to you.

It's time to throw out the status quo, add in some disruption for the common good, and make your marketing role your own.

You want to excel and put a distinct stamp on the role you're in — and there are ways you can uplevel and streamline your current processes to help you demonstrate that you're intelligent, resourceful, and efficient.

This guide will help you feel empowered to take charge in your company with an innovative toolkit to help you lead the way.

REMOVING SMALL TASKS THAT DERAIL YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

When small tasks and internal processes build up, they can eat up a large part of your day. The following scenarios are often encountered in marketing agencies, but that doesn't mean you have to endure them. Here are simple solutions to get you back on track when your most important tasks need to be prioritized.

SCENARIO 01

Your team or coworkers are constantly asking you for materials such as branding assets, brochures, copies of presentations, or other documents.

We've all been guilty of doing this from time to time. We need something quickly, and we have it in our minds that our coworker will know exactly where it is.

But when someone asks us for a quick hand, it can be quite a challenge to get back on track with your tasks. Even five minutes to locate a document can derail our flow and make us lose serious concentration.

SOLUTION

Create a shared space of assets and train your team on how to use it.

Whether you're using a shared network of computers or a cloud system, having a single place where all assets are housed can help your team become more efficient and autonomous in finding the materials they need. Keep it organized and up to date, and you'll be golden.

If there's a system already in place, conduct a quick team training (and record it) on how to use the organizational structure. Save the recorded training to a team folder for future employees to reference.

If you're like us and use a shared Google Drive, make sure your team is aware of the search function. This small tool is often overlooked and forgotten about — but it saves major time when looking for documents.

SCENARIO 02

Your team or clients are indecisive about meeting times, causing endless back and forth about picking a time slot.

Nailing down schedules is just one of those things that all professionals struggle with. You want to be mindful of others' schedules while also allowing yourself plenty of time to prep. If it takes five emails to set a meeting time, it's probably time to implement a new process.

SOLUTION

Use an automated calendar link to allow for easy scheduling.

If you haven't gotten on the calendar link yet, now is the time. This simple solution makes it easy for your clients and team to see your availability and pick a time that works best for them. Keep this link in your email signature and point people to it. This gives them an easy way to set a meeting time while also saving you from the back-and-forth scheduling emails.

PRO TIP:

Set your meeting schedule with incremental availability time slots, allowing you plenty of time to notice new meetings and blocking time for deep work, meal times, and other appointments.

SCENARIO 03

Your sales team is constantly hitting you up for an urgent request that needs to be taken on immediately.

Not only are these requests usually last minute, but they can also put a serious dent in your planned work schedule for the day. Reshifting your schedule, figuring out the details, and setting deadlines can cost you a lot of time that you already don't have.

SOLUTION

Use a shared platform with requests and connect frequently.

If there is one individual or team that is contacting you nonstop for updates and requests, set up a regular weekly or bi-weekly meeting with them to help you fill in the gaps on what they need and give them peace of mind. Not only will this save you time in the long run, but you'll get into a productivity cadence that works for everyone.

If you aren't using a shared project management tool (we like Jira, Trello, and Asana), now is the time to implement one.

If you aren't ready to do that yet, you can also set up a workload spreadsheet. It'll allow prioritization and details to be easily dropped in by users while also keeping track of progress. Your team will be able to use this spreadsheet as a reference for when they can expect their resources to be ready.

SCENARIO 04

You're finding it difficult to knock out big projects since you're constantly getting emails, Slack messages, and other interruptions.

While your daily team meetings are important for updates and staying on track, hearing your Slack or email chime every five seconds can seriously derail your focus time.

While a lot of us like to think that we can hop from task to task, constant communication makes it difficult to keep your head down and produce great work. If you're in a remote setting like us, you can't just close your office door.

SOLUTION

Gatekeep your availability with calendar blocks for focus time.

The majority of online calendars allow you to book focus or deep work time. Be a gatekeeper of your availability and turn those notifications off. Leave this time visible to others so they can know that you're working hard and getting stuff done. Hopefully, their question or request can wait until your focus time is over.

If you're using Slack, set your status to "away" or integrate your calendar app to allow others to see you're busy and unavailable to chat.

PRO TIP:

Tackle the big things first. If you're constantly putting things off until later or when you think you'll have more time, chances are you're going to feel crunched for time and sweating that upcoming deadline. Knock it out early and save the small tasks for later on.

TAKE A STEP BACK AND REEVALUATE YOUR ORG STRUCTURE

Do you have the right people and roles in place to get work done and boost productivity? As hard as it may be, having the wrong people fill roles that are crucial to your org structure can cause serious friction. You've got to cut the dead weight and determine what your department or team needs to truly be successful.

SCENARIO 05

Tasks aren't getting done on time due to bottlenecks. Jobs are handled by those who don't fit well with the role they are given.

If tasks aren't getting done, it might be time to evaluate if it's due to the process — or the person. If someone is trained as a graphic designer, they probably don't have the right knowledge or experience to code websites or conduct SEO research.

SOLUTION

Identify where your team's strengths and weaknesses are. Then, evaluate if you can expand the team to fill in the empty spots.

Start with getting to know each team member. Find out where their strengths lie and see if their role aligns with those strengths. If not, it's time to do some shifting so the correct people are handling tasks where they can naturally excel. Be agile with this process and learn to be flexible, as roles can change while people grow and learn.

SCENARIO 06

You're the go-to person for everything, so a large chunk of your time is spent doing things for others or explaining your processes.

When you're the go-to person, you're constantly being bombarded with questions and requests about how to do something. We all like lending a helping hand, but these requests can put a major pause on your current priorities and tasks.

SOLUTION

Document your processes and store them in a team-accessible location for reference.

In case you couldn't tell, we're huge on documenting processes and referring team members to these recordings or documents for future training. Even if you're a one-person team, ensuring all of your processes are documented and replicable will ensure future employees have everything they need.

STREAMLINE YOUR INTERNAL PROCESS

If you're constantly missing monthly deadlines or having a hard time completing projects on time, you might need to reevaluate your internal processes and come up with new solutions for getting the job done.

SCENARIO 07

You're consistently missing the same turnaround times or production schedule.

Certain tasks are usually done monthly — like social media posts, newsletters, marketing emails, etc. — but you find yourself consistently falling short when it comes to the turnaround process. You constantly have to ask for status updates and get bottlenecked at certain points in the process. These are major roadblocks that can derail your timeline and hinder your efficiency.

SOLUTION

Plan for more time and evaluate the people that touch these tasks and if they can be consolidated.

There's no rule that says you have to complete your routine tasks at the same time every month or quarter. While there may be certain tasks that need to be completed at a specific time, you can change your process and schedule to allow for extra time because delivering a great finished product is the main goal.

SCENARIO 08

Tasks take forever and end up ping-ponging around the team.

Tasks are jumping from person to person and changing constantly — and nobody can agree on what's best. This makes your process inefficient and adds unnecessary labor.

SOLUTION

Evaluate the steps needed to complete your tasks and remove unnecessary checkpoints.

Review if any steps can be combined. Can you combine graphic and copy reviews? Is it necessary for the project to be reviewed by additional people? Who can be removed and what needs to stay? Create the new flow, present it to the team, and try it out. But stickwith it! Don't give up after one or two tries. There are always hiccups and adjustments when new processes are implemented.

SCENARIO 09

You rarely get approvals or sign-offs on time, and projects end up getting delayed.

You're struggling to get approvals and struggling to keep things moving efficiently. Whether internal or external, delays can be a huge damper and seriously throw off timelines and processes.

SOLUTION

Set clear expectations and deadlines, but also share your reasons behind these deadlines for a complete understanding from the whole team.

If you're setting deadlines without any cause, you aren't being efficient. When you're sharing your deadlines and expectations with your team, be sure to also share your reasoning behind them. Map out your follow-up notifications, and if your deadline still is not met, move on with the next step. The train keeps chugging, and people will learn to hop on board.

TAKE BACK YOUR MARKETING MEETINGS

Don't let meetings take over your life. Start making standards and optimizing meetings to hit the main points and skip the fluff. Shorter and more impactful meetings will get your message across and prevent your attendees from zoning out. Keep it short and sweet!

SCENARIO 10

Your team doesn't know what you are doing and when.

If your team doesn't know when you're booked, this can lead to interruptions and miscommunication. And the same goes for your side as well. If you don't know when your team is booked, you might be questioning why they are unresponsive.

SOLUTION

Use a shared calendar that's integrated with your chat platform.

We're big fans of Google Calendar, but this isn't the only option. Using a shared calendar allows your team to know who is in a meeting and when, ensuring that you aren't being interrupted or being the interrupter. If you use a chat platform such as Slack, integrate your calendar with it. The platform will automatically update your status with your meetings or block time to let your team know when you're available.

SCENARIO 11

Your meetings have no goals and are constantly being canceled.

Your meetings are a place for collaboration, updates, and planning. With no specific goals, they are not productive and can end up lasting for an hour or more. You might also notice that meetings are often canceled or aren't accomplishing anything.

SOLUTION

Consolidate your meeting time and set a clear agenda.

Start shortening your meeting times. Start with only 30 minutes. This will show that you mean business and need to get things done. Remember to send reminders 24 hours in advance to avoid cancellations, and more notice for you if it does need to be moved. And be sure to create and share your agenda about what will be discussed. Use a template that your team uses, list action items, and centralize your notes. This will help you stay on task. When you're done with your action items, you're done with the meeting!

PRO TIP:

Start with important KPIs, celebrating wins and past action items.

SCENARIO 12

There are no follow-ups after meetings.

Your meetings don't have any follow-up or reminders, so after the meetings are over, people aren't clear about their next steps. This can lead to friction at your next meeting when status updates are requested or when deadlines are approaching.

SOLUTION

Send your follow-ups within 24 hours to let people know what they're responsible for.

Don't assume people are taking notes. Decide team to-dos in the meeting and write them down. After your meeting concludes, send a follow-up email within 24 hours with assigned tasks and deadlines. This will ensure your team is aligned and that tasks get done.

STREAMLINE YOUR PLANNING FOR MORE EFFICIENT CONTENT, CAMPAIGNS, AND DIGITAL ADVERTISING

If you aren't planning your content, campaigns, and digital advertising, then you might be biting off more than you can chew — or not doing enough. Without planning, you won't know where your discrepancies lie or how to fix them.

SCENARIO 13

Your content isn't flowing.

You aren't planning your content. You're facing too much, too little, and are never on time. This can be frustrating beyond the planning process. It can account for discrepancies in deliverables and contractual obligations.

SOLUTION

Plan, plan, plan — but plan with purpose.

You have to dedicate time to your planning. Think long-term and big picture. The plan is a roadmap to the end goal versus just the next step.

Include any progress toggles you might need on your content calendar so your team can check status at any time, instead of waiting until the last minute to ask you where things are. Understand dependencies and plan to accommodate them.

SCENARIO 14

Your extended team communication is taking up too much of your time.

We've all been there. Emailing back and forth with vendors or freelancers, sharing assets, and nailing down details. It takes time, and if you're not on the same page, it can eat up a large part of your day. This is where projects get delayed, work is not completed to your expectations, and everyone is unhappy with the process.

SOLUTION

Set the standard and roll out systems to your extended team.

While it can take a lot of time to begin with, coordinating with your outside team and setting a system in place can be a huge weight off of your shoulders in the future.

Share your docs, drives, project management system, or platform to help get your team on the same page. Share full creative briefs with due dates, along with links to centralized brand assets. This will speed up the process and ensure your extended partner has everything they need.

USE TECHNOLOGY TO YOUR BENEFIT

Leveraging technology and automation is an important step. With so many tools designed for automation and integration that save time and resources, why wouldn't you take advantage of them?

SCENARIO 15   You're getting lost in reporting.

Let's face it: Manual reporting takes time. Preparing reports and then sharing them with clients in an easily digestible format takes an additional amount of time that you probably don't have. Not to mention, manual entry can lead to mistakes and errors in reporting.

SOLUTION   Aggregate your data with a service.

Web-based reporting tools are your new best friend. These services will aggregate your data for regular reporting across all of your data sources. Website, leads, content, social media, and more can be shared in one platform with dashboards that are easy for your team and clients to understand, giving you time back without having to explain what these numbers mean. At LAIRE, we're big fans of Databox and HubSpot.

SCENARIO 16   Jumping around systems is inefficient and can lead to inaccuracies in your work.

We've all been there. We've got 21 tabs open and are hopping from platform to platform to gather data and aggregate it into one document. This can lead to significant inaccuracies in your reporting.

SOLUTION   Combine and integrate your systems into one place.

It's time to question these systems. Is it necessary to keep them separate? Or is there a way that they can be integrated and combined? In this day and age, it's unlikely that systems can't be integrated, and custom APIs can be put into place to save your entire team time. If you can't find an integration, we can guarantee that there's a solution out there that will answer all of your needs — just keep looking!

SCENARIO 17   You're the only person that knows how to operate your software.

Have you ever been the internal IT person for a specific platform or software? If you have, then you know the familiar ding of a coworker asking you a question. Your team has probably fallen into a rut of just allowing you to be the only expert or go-to person for this particular software. Not only is this inefficient, but it can be a real headache should you need to pass the torch or move to another role.

SOLUTION   Train your team and use the software's helpful resources.

It's time to identify at least two other individuals in your organization who are willing and able to learn how to use your daily tools. Document or record the training for team members to reference. Not only will this eliminate you as the go-to expert, but it will allow your team to look for answers before sending you an email. And don't forget about the abundance of resources already available from software companies. Call their help desk or do a quick internet search. You're likely to find the answer you're looking for.

ALIGN YOUR DEPARTMENTS AND ELIMINATE SILOS

How often have you heard that sales and marketing teams are like oil and water? Now more than ever, it's time to align the different departments so that communication flows freely with minimized chances of misunderstandings and delays. Getting familiar with each team's objectives will help you fine-tune your strategies to better support everyone's goals.

SCENARIO 18

There's a lack of buy-in between departments, and marketing gets the short end of the stick.

Many departments aren't 100% on board with marketing. They don't understand the importance of marketing and have a hard time seeing how it can make a difference. There can be a disconnect between sales, R&D, accounting, and marketing, mainly from a lack of understanding of how marketing can help them meet their goals.

If you've been in this position, you might have difficulty getting the resources or materials you need to create a final product that will bring in leads and additional revenue.

SOLUTION

Support other departmental efforts by embedding a marketing point of view.

How does marketing fit into the mix, and how can marketing support other departments' goals? By aligning marketing with these overarching goals, you can gain buy-in and position your department as a valuable resource.

For example, if the sales department needs a spec sheet of product features, a marketing POV will add benefits and competitive advantages that better connect with the buyer. Everything can be a marketing asset, and everyone benefits when marketing has eyes on company materials.

SCENARIO 19

Your business operates in silos.

No department is in touch with the others, and the lack of communication leaves holes that hinder your strategies. Your marketing efforts don't meet your expectations, and you don't have true insight into your company's operations or processes outside of your department's lane.

SOLUTION

Collaborate with the key members of each department.

Collaboration is key. It's important to set up regular communication with one key member of each department to discuss goals and how you can create beneficial overlap between your departments. You might also consider building a topic-focused channel in your communication platform (for example, Slack or Microsoft Teams) with those key members. This route can be a huge time saver in keeping the communication open and collaborative while maintaining organization on your side.

FOCUS ON THE KPIs THAT MATTER

People tend to think that every single number is important — but don't allow yourself to get overwhelmed. Put your energy into showing what is moving the needle and making an impact.

SCENARIO 20

You're focused on numbers in your reporting.

Don't get us wrong, numbers are important. But if you're getting caught up in the numbers instead of the messaging, you're missing out on the big picture. There's so much more to your reporting than its numerical value.

SOLUTION

Focus on the impact of your reporting.

Report on impact, not on numbers. Think about which numbers speak to the leads and customers you're bringing in. While website sessions can be an impressive metric, highlighting organic sessions to conversions will make a much bigger impression, even if that number is considerably smaller. Verbalizing how the numbers impact revenue is far more important than standard analytics.

SCENARIO 21

Your reporting presentations are boring for management and other departments.

When people start zoning out during your reporting presentations, it can seem like an insult. You've worked hard to prepare and show off the hard work you've put into producing the numbers.

SOLUTION

Don't gatekeep your data based on what you feel is important.

It's time to align your reporting with company or department goals. Marketers may assume what leaders find value in, but it's time to know for sure.

Ask yourself and your manager or departments which KPIs they find most valuable. If you have to, create separate reports by department to report on information that your management finds important, engaging, and relevant to their main goals.

SCENARIO 22

KPI TMI

Need we say more? You're oversharing KPIs and you're getting lost in the amount of data that you're focusing on. 45 data points are too many to keep up with and explain to the C-Suite.

SOLUTION

Keep it short and sweet.

As mentioned, 45 data points are too many. You might have access to 25 across website traffic alone. But presenting five to six highly valuable metrics will help you stick to the point. For example, you can report on:

- Organic sessions
- Contacts by source
- Sessions to conversions
- Sessions by source
- Top performing pages

This helps everyone stay engaged and cuts down on time spent on unnecessary reporting.

FILL THE GAPS

Build resources. Know when to reach outside or expand your team. Weigh the cost of bringing talent in-house vs using vendor partners.

SCENARIO 23

There aren't enough bodies in your department.

Nothing is worse than having plenty of work for five people but only having three employees. The same goes for work that requires a specific skill set that your team doesn't have. This can lead to long workdays, a lack of work-life balance, and serious burnout.

SOLUTION

Build your team, whether it's internally or externally.

Assess your budget. Can you afford to add to your team and strengthen your department? If so, great! If not, building an external team could be the way to go. It can improve productivity, and the quality of work, and reduce costs.

There are a plethora of freelancers, contractors, and niche agencies to help you with:

- Paid media
- Content
- Public relations
- Website design & development
- Lead gen
- Graphic design

Knowing your strengths and outsourcing to others who can fill in the gaps is not only smart — it's necessary for the long-term success of your team.

SCENARIO 24

There will always be problems.

It doesn't matter how long you've been in your role, how long your company has been operating, or the budget you have available.

SOLUTION

It's all about mindset.

You will always find what you focus on. If you're looking for problems, you will find problems. If you're looking for solutions, you'll always find them. The key is to spend your time focused on solutions. There is a solution to every problem. Every successful employee, CEO, and entrepreneur has this mindset.

CONCLUSION:
IT STARTS WITH YOU

To crush your marketing role, you have to first believe that you can.

If you need some help along the way, we're a team of marketers that is here to help. We know your unique challenges and can suggest plenty of tips to help you level up in your current role.

Connect with us for a free 20-minute marketing consultation to discuss your current marketing activities and where you can grow.

LET'S TALK

LAIRE

704-561-1975
info@lairedigital.com
www.lairedigital.com